

REMARKS

The Official Action of April 9, 2004, and the prior art cited and relied upon therein have been carefully studied. The claims in the application are now claims 1 and 4-13, and these claims define patentable subject matter warranting their allowance. Favorable reconsideration and such allowance are respectfully urged.

New claims 11-13 have been added. Claims 1 and 4-13 remain in the application for consideration.

Applicant has enclosed herewith amended Figs. 2 and 3 which correct the identification of elements 42 and 46.

In response to the Examiner's objection to claim 4 and 8, Applicant has amended both claims to correct the antecedent problems identified by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that this objection has been overcome.

The Examiner has further rejected claims 1, 6 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Manoach '253, claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Manoach, and claims 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manoach in view of Villari '312. Applicant respectfully traverses all of these rejections for the following reasons.

With respect to Claim 1 the Examiner states that DE '523 discloses:

(a) "the sheets being sealingly connected by a plurality of connection lines 14 (Fig. 1)" [Office Action: page 2, line 5 from the bottom];

(b) "the width of the second strip region being greater than that of the first strip region

(c) to form pleats 24 (Fig. 2)" [(Office Action, paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3)].

With respect to Claims 4 and 5, the Examiner states that the width of the second strip in Figs. 1 and 2 of DE '523 appears to be greater than the first strip region in about 50% of the width of the first strip region and each pleat in Figs. 1 -2 appears to overlap the second strip region of an immediately adjacent neighboring cell about 25% to 35%.

To assist the Examiner's review, Applicant has enclosed herewith an English language translation of the portion of DE'523 where Figs. 1 and 2 are described in detail. In light of the translation, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's identification of elements in DE'523 which he maintains are equivalent of that claimed by Applicant is not correct.

As the Examiner will note from the penultimate paragraph on page 1 of the translation, and Fig. 2 of DE '523, the latter discloses a sleeve in which two sheets "are connected to each other by annular dividing walls 24. The dividing walls extend at an acute angle to the longitudinal axis of the sleeve." One end of the dividing wall 24 is connected "to the inner surface of the outer layer 20 along line 16, whereas the opposite end of the dividing wall is connected to the inner surface of the inner layer 22 along the line 14, whereby said latter line 14 is offset in the longitudinal direction of the sleeve, so that the overlapping 18 (Fig. 1) is produced between the two cells I and II".

In view of the above description, it is clear that the Examiner's statements above are not correct since the sheets in DE '523 are not fixed to each other by a plurality of connection lines as stated by the Examiner and as defined in Claim 1 of the application, but rather are spaced apart from each other by a plurality of the dividing walls 24. Line 14 to which the Examiner refers, is a merger between the wall 24 and one of the sheets, rather than being a connection line between the two sheets as the Examiner states, whilst line 16 which the Examiner has not addressed is a merger between the wall 24 and the other sheet.

Consequently, contrary to the Examiner's statement above, strip regions between two adjacent walls 24, i.e. first regions between two adjacent merger lines 16 and second regions between two adjacent merger lines 14, all have the same width, as clearly seen in both Figs. 1 and 2 of DE'523. This teaches away from the requirement of Claim 1 that a width of one strip region between the connection lines defining each of the majority of the cells, is greater than the width of the other strip region of the same cell, i.e. between the same connection lines.

Furthermore, contrary to the Examiner's statement (c) above, reference numeral 24 to which the Examiner refers to as a pleat, is not a pleat at all, but rather is an inclined wall. Since, as explained above, there is no difference in width between the strip regions of each cell shown in DE '523, no pleats are defined in the sleeve of DE '523.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is fully patentable in view of DE '523 since the latter does not disclose at least the following features of the sleeve of Claim:

- two sheets fixed to each other by connecting lines;

- a different width of strip regions in each of a majority of cells; and

- pleats formed due to the different width of the strip regions.

The above features allow for a different, much simpler and elegant way, of producing a sleeve than that of DE '523, which does even not hint at a design having the above features.

In view of the above explanations, it is clear that the Examiner's statements regarding Claims 4 and 5 are also not correct. Nowhere in the drawings of DE '523 to which the Examiner refers is it shown that the width of one strip region is greater than the width of the other strip region is it about 50% of the width of the other strip region, as defined in Claim 4. Neither do the drawings of DE '523 show pleats overlapping adjacent strip regions, since there are no pleats in the sleeve of DE '523.

Consequently, Applicant submits that Claims 4 and 5 are independently patentable over DE'523.

The patentability of the remainder of the claims is deemed to be supported at least by the patentability of Claim 1.


Applicant finally notes that Claim 8 as amended is described in the specification of the application, i.e., on page 3, lines 11-12. The third sheet claimed is clearly not disclosed in DE '523 since in the sleeve described therein no pleats exist that need a third sheet to keep them pleated in both inflated and deflated position as shown in Fig. 2 and 3 of the application.

The prior art documents made of record and not relied upon have been noted along with the implication that such documents are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently pertinent to warrant their applications against any of applicant's claims.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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ANNOTATED SHEET SHOWING CHANGES



FIG. 1

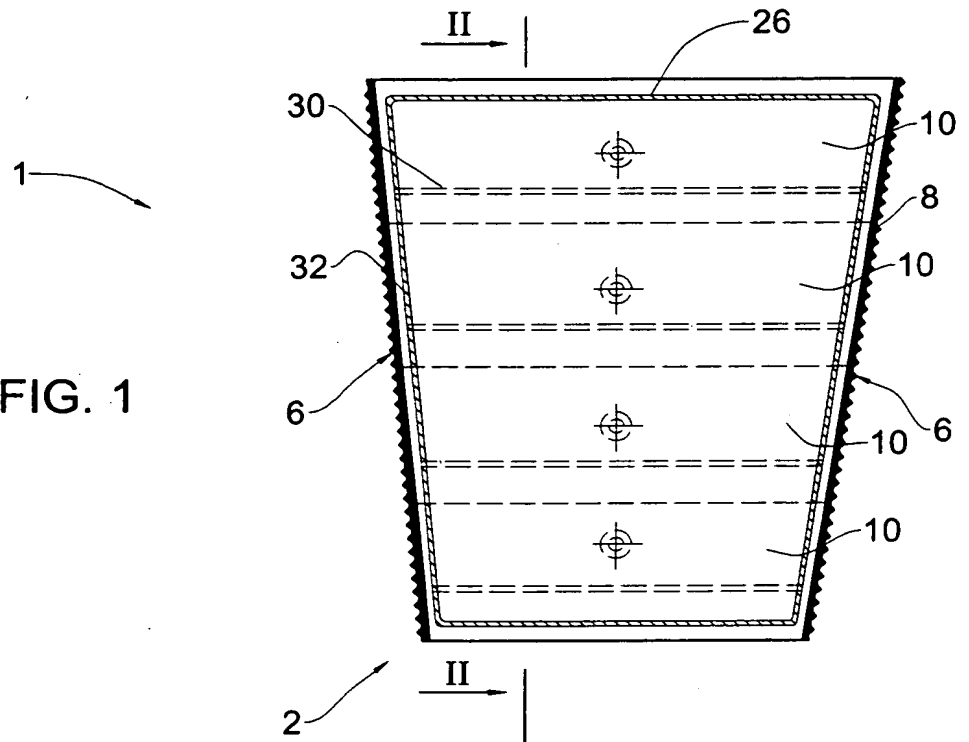


FIG. 2

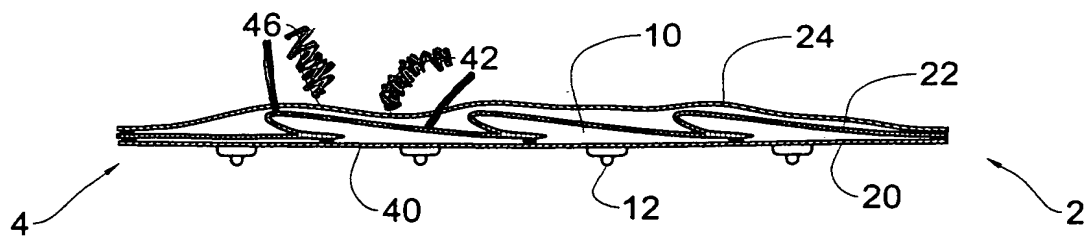


FIG. 3

